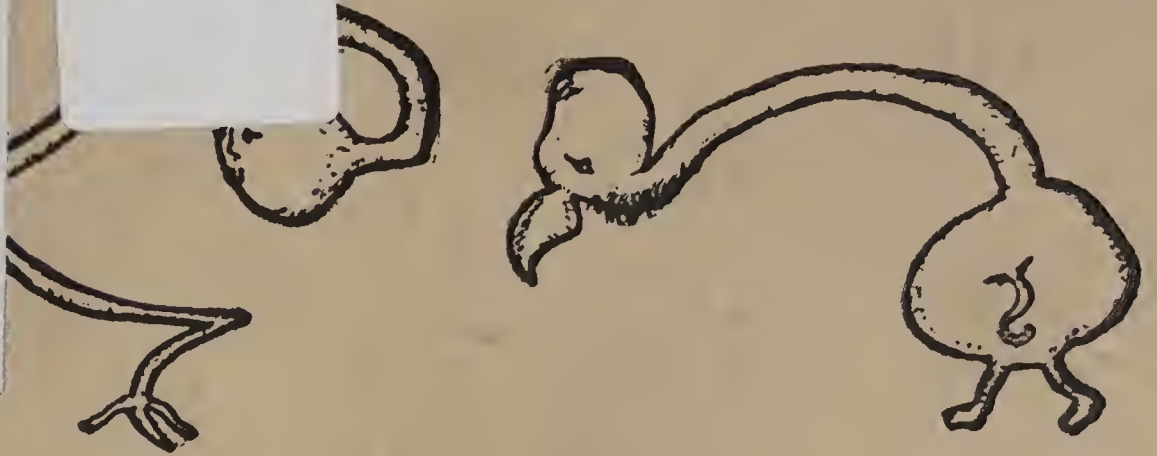


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QUITE WILD ANIMALS

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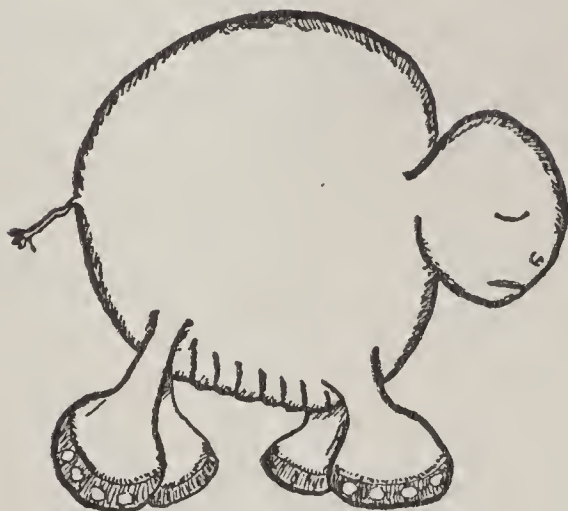
BEATRICE CURTIS BROWN





“QUITE WILD ANIMALS”

BY
BEATRICE CURTIS BROWN



NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1923

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PRINTED IN U. S. A.

Price \$1.00

VAIL-BALLOU COMPANY
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

OCT 25 1923

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GROWP



GROWP

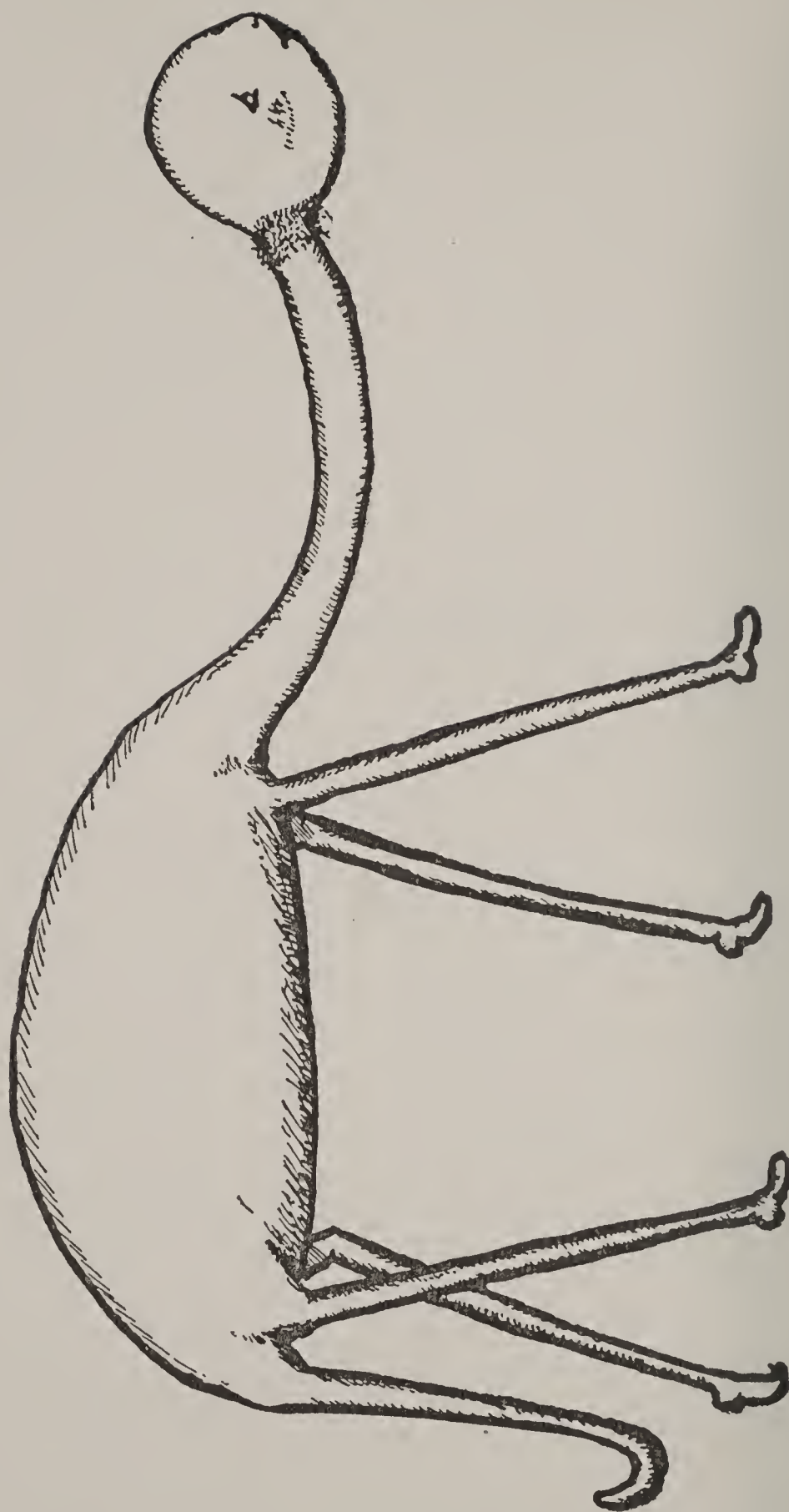
This is Growp. He is rather dangerous and can run faster than any one else when he is angry, which he often is, so most people keep away from him as much as possible.

If you look at the picture you will see that he has a beak and two wings, but otherwise he is quite an ordinary animal, so for a long time he did not know what to call himself, a beast or a bird. At last a friend said to him, "Why don't you call yourself a birst?" So that is what he does now.

Growp lives in a large wet and muddy field all alone. He has built himself a house out of old tins and broken saucers that people have thrown at him. It is a most ugly house and has no windows, but he thinks it is very beautiful and no one dares to contradict him.

He has hardly any friends and those he does have do not come to see him very much, because he cannot taste anything, on account of his beak (no one with a beak can, you know, and that is why they eat queer things like worms), so he is very apt to eat his visitors. He says he is getting lonely but I don't believe him. I think he means he is getting hungry.

DOOLYBOO



DOOLYBOO

Oh gaze on Doolyboo awhile,
Observe her sweet and winning smile,
Admire the way she lifts her feet,
And see how clean she is, and neat.
She's always asked to tea or dine
Because her manners are so fine;
Where'er she drinks from glass or cup
She puts her little finger up:
She's always clean of paw and face
And waves her tail in dainty grace.
She never shouts or stamps her feet,
She knows that would be indiscreet,
But always laughs when jokes are made,
And quite agrees with all that's said.

She is the best beloved of all,
By each and every animal,
They like to have her come to play
They're sorry when she goes away.

Oh, let us all then try to be
As sweet and rosy-cheeked as she.

BAWGUM



BAWGUM

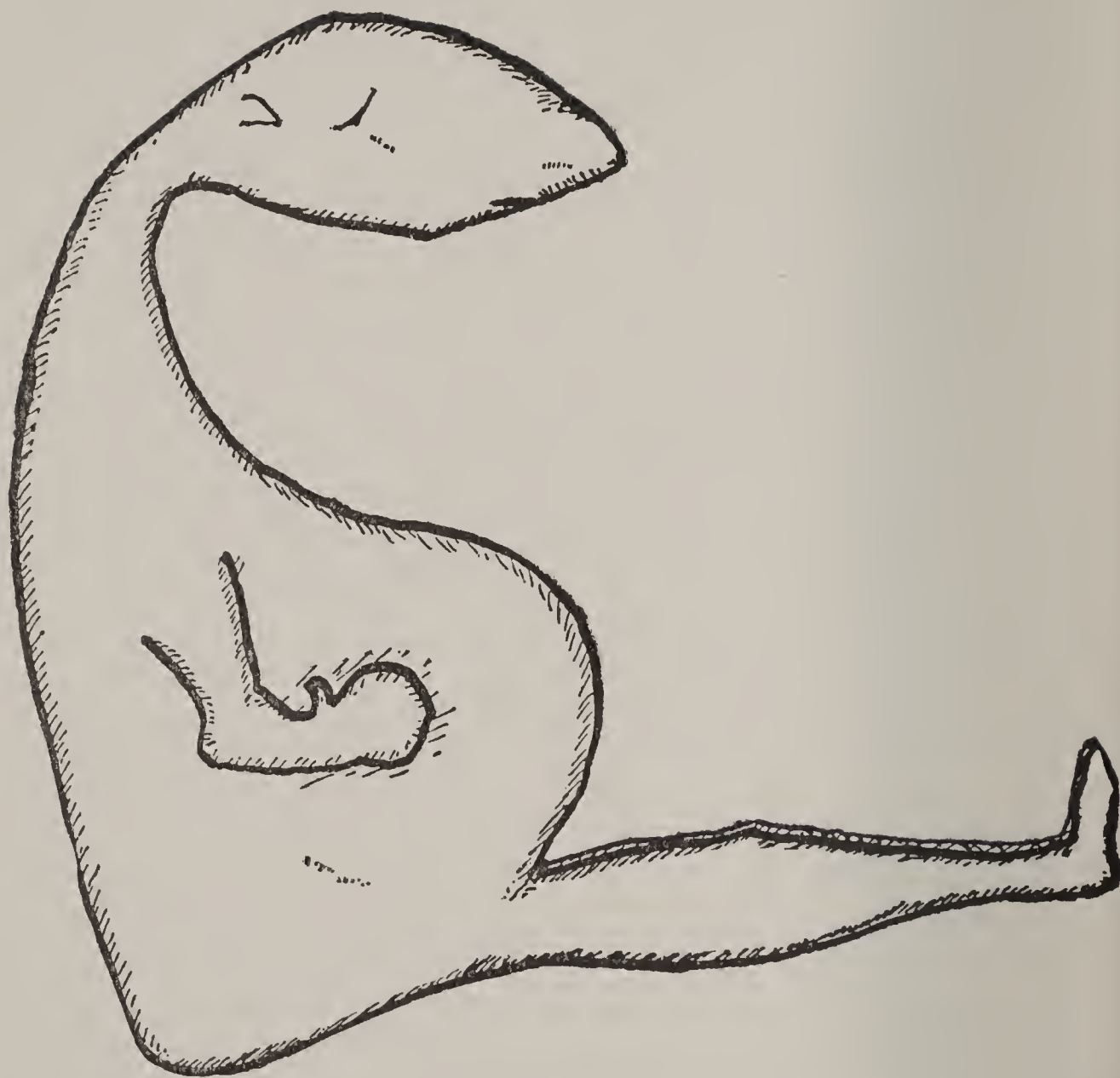
This is Bawgum. In spite of his fierce expression, he is perfectly safe and has the softest possible heart, but he likes to be thought terrifying and dangerous. Unfortunately nobody really believes he is after they have seen his tail which is most playful and undignified. However, it hurts his feelings to be told that he has a playful tail, so people generally pretend they don't notice it.

Bawgum talks a good deal because he thinks he has rather a fine voice, and the words he uses are so long that his friends always bring dictionaries when they come to tea with him. Some one said that he started a word one Sunday and was still saying it when they came to see him next Sunday, but I think this must be a joke.

He is rather fat and the doctor has recently told him that he ought to eat nothing but tadpoles for at least three months, but after Bawgum had been eating tadpoles for three days there were no more left in the country, so now he has gone back to his usual diet. I believe the doctor has told him to try skipping every morning after breakfast (for he is really anxious to get thin, he thinks it would make him look more dignified).

I am afraid he will find it rather difficult to skip, but he is going to try it for he has asked two friends to come and turn the skipping rope for him.

QUEEK



QUEEK

This is Queek. He is the laziest of all the animals and every year he is getting fatter and fatter, although his legs still remain weak and wobbly because he never uses them.

Years ago, when he was young, Queek used to be quite active, and one day he built himself a house. It was in the hot weather on a specially hot day, so when he had finished it (all except the front door) he sat down on the flower-bed outside his dining-room window and leaned against the wall. He found it so comfortable sitting against the wall of his house in the sun that he simply could not find the energy to get up. He did not go to bed, neither did he get up for breakfast the next morning. In fact to make a long story short, he has been sitting there ever since.

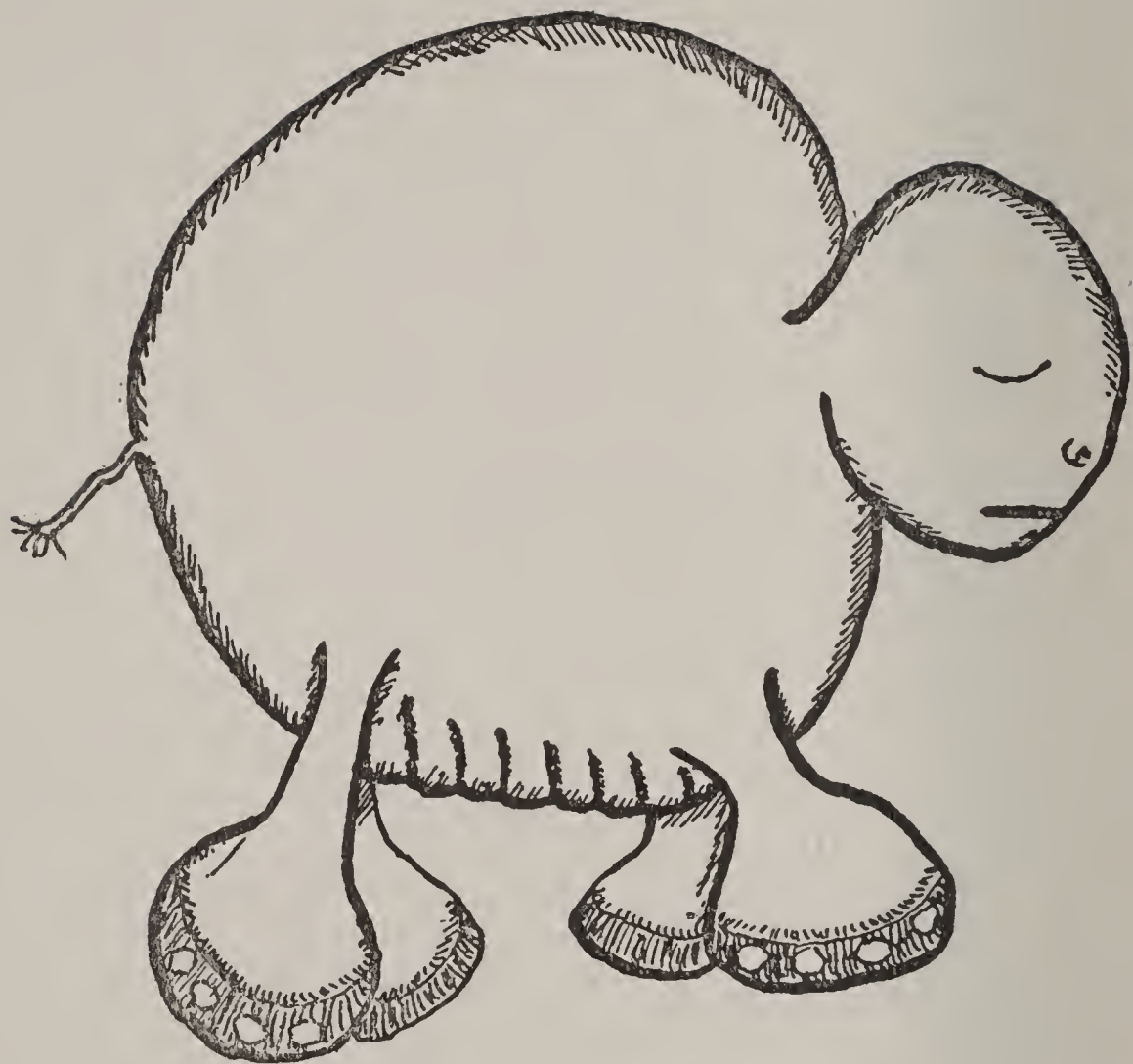
So he has never been inside his little house that he built so carefully that morning, and his cousin the Skutch cleans it out thoroughly every month and also comes round at mealtimes and passes out Queek's food to him through the window.

His only worry is the front door, which he feels ought to be put on because the dust blows in and makes the

hall carpet so dirty. However, every one else says they are much too busy to spend time on a house that no one lives in, and Queek seems to think that he will never do it, so he will probably go on worrying about it for a very long time. And I think it serves him right.

It seems sad to think of him sitting there on the flower-bed all his life, but he says he is perfectly happy and comfortable, specially since his last birthday when the animals gave him a big umbrella to keep him dry in the wet weather. So perhaps we don't need to pity him.

GORRIBLE



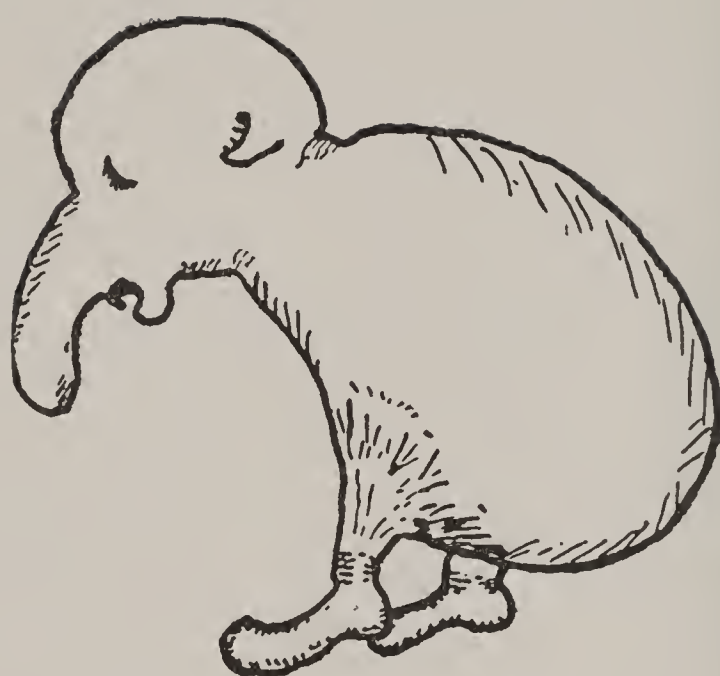
GORRIBLE

Gorrible is an extremely nice creature though not beautiful. He is always tired, for his feet each weigh about as much as an omnibus with three people inside, one on top, the driver and the conductor, and the conductor's little "ting" thing altogether. So it is a terrible effort for him to walk. When he is asked out to tea he has to start several days beforehand and take a little tent to sleep in at nights while he is getting there, because his progress is so slow. After every five steps (one with each foot and one jump) he has to sit down and rest. Also he suffers terribly from flies in the summer. They will settle on the middle of his back, and he has been trying to switch them off with his tail for nearly thirty-seven years now. I don't believe he will ever succeed.

You would hardly think to look at him that he received a medal once for rescuing some one. It was like this. One day Doolyboo, who has a bad habit of not looking what her feet are doing, walked into a pond. She cannot swim and her cries for help were pitiful to hear. Now it just happened that Gorrible was on his way to a Garden Party at Queek's and was camping near

the river so that he could have water with which to make his morning tea. He heard Doolyboo cry out and without waiting to put on his goloshes he rushed to the river. (When I say "rushed" I mean he went as fast as *he* could, he took six steps and two jumps between each rest and got to the water's edge in about ten minutes). He plunged in and swam out to Doolyboo and said to her, "Catch hold of my tail—only don't pull too hard—and breathe outwards." Then he swam in and gave Doolyboo a nice hot drink and told her to look where she was going next time. Now Slood says this wasn't anything to make a fuss about because the water wasn't deep anyway, and it is certainly true that Doolyboo was only wet to the top of her ankles, but Slood is a mean, cowardly animal, and I think it was a perfectly splendid act of bravery for Gorrible to perform.

THE BOLLA



THE BOLLA

This is Bolla. He has had rather a sad life. To begin with, years ago, he ate too much at a birthday party and was terribly ill for many months. When he was better, he took a vow that he would never eat rich food again, so now he feeds entirely on those light, airy feathers (one for breakfast, two for dinner, and one for tea) that you sometimes see floating about the room after the bed has been made up. So although he looks bulgy he is quite empty and perfectly resembles a balloon. This is a great trouble to him. He just cannot keep on the ground, but with the slightest puff of wind he is taken up and has to float till the breeze drops and he is allowed to alight gently on the ground probably miles from where he started.

Many years ago, before the birthday party, when he was still a young and handsome animal, he fell in love with a beautiful young damsel-animal and the marriage was arranged to take place in the spring. This was the autumn and between the engagement and the wedding occurred the birthday party. So when the great day arrived, Bolla had become the light airy creature he is now. However his bride loved him so much she didn't

mind. But poor Bolla! Just as the wedding march began, a breeze arose and he was borne aloft and wafted away, very far away indeed, because the breeze became a hurricane, and lasted for three days and he was set down in an entirely new country, and he has never been able to find his way back to his bride since. He is terribly miserable about this, and has never smiled since that day, although he is very kind and still makes jokes in a melancholy way, so that his friends won't feel depressed when they are with him. He has no fixed home, because he would not be able to settle down in one, but he carries a clean white paper-bag with him to sleep in in case he is wafted far away from any shelter and has to spend the night outdoors.

GOLOPHOS



GOLOPHOS

This is Golophos. He was meant to be a respectable size but his neck forgot to stop growing and by the time it had reached the end he felt he must have a head to suit it. So he does not quite fit himself.

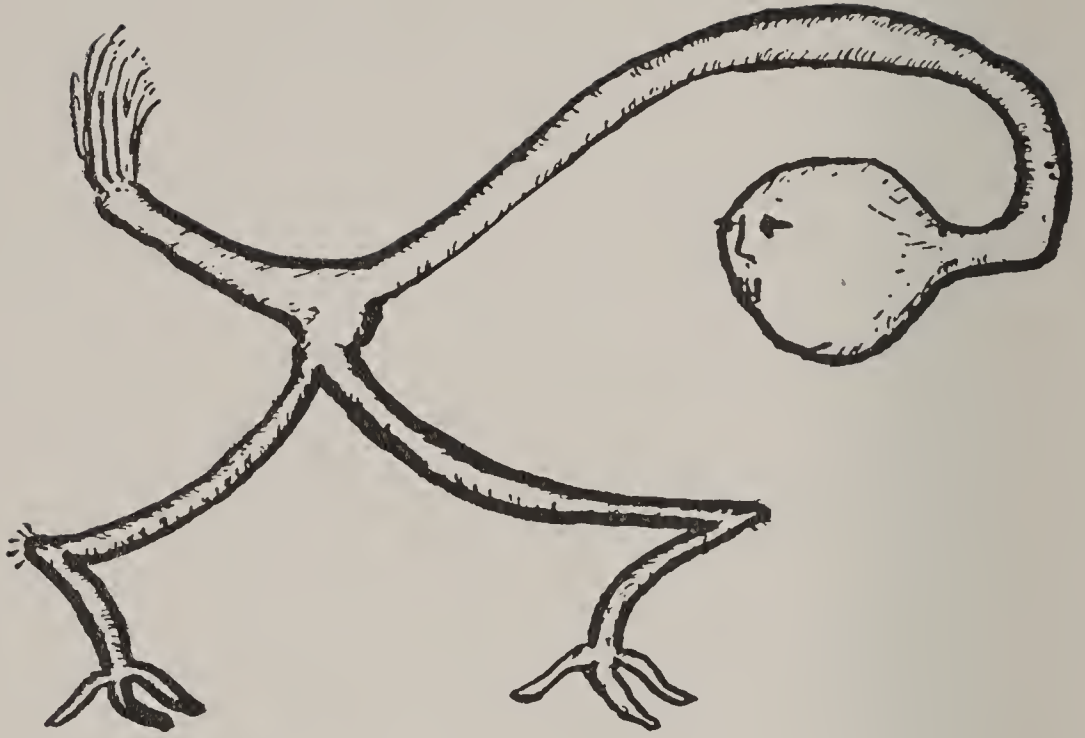
He is not very much liked by the rest of the animals because he is so proud and superior. He thinks that because he can see over all their heads that he knows a great deal more than the rest of them. He always wears this supercilious expression.

Now if he had chosen to be nice, he could have made a fortune by letting little animals slide down his neck at five cents a slide. Their parents would have been only too glad to give them a quarter to get them out of the way. But Golophos felt it would be beneath his dignity to let the little ones use him as a place of entertainment, so now he has to go without sugar because he has no money to buy it with.

He lives in a beautiful house with electric lights and hot and cold water, but there are only three walls to it. This is because he is too big to get through a door so he had to have one wall taken down or he could not have got into the house at all. Of course this means that

every one can see what he is doing inside, but he does not mind that because he is sure that every one admires him so much. It is just like him to have a name like that. He says it is Greek but it isn't. He won't let people call him Phossy for short.

SQUILLY-WIGGLE



SQUILLY-WIGGLE

The Squilly-wiggle has tried to make up for his lack of dignity by putting a hyphen in the middle of his name. The rest of the animals think it is very conceited of him and try to leave it out when they write him letters, but he has had it put on his calling cards, so there it is.

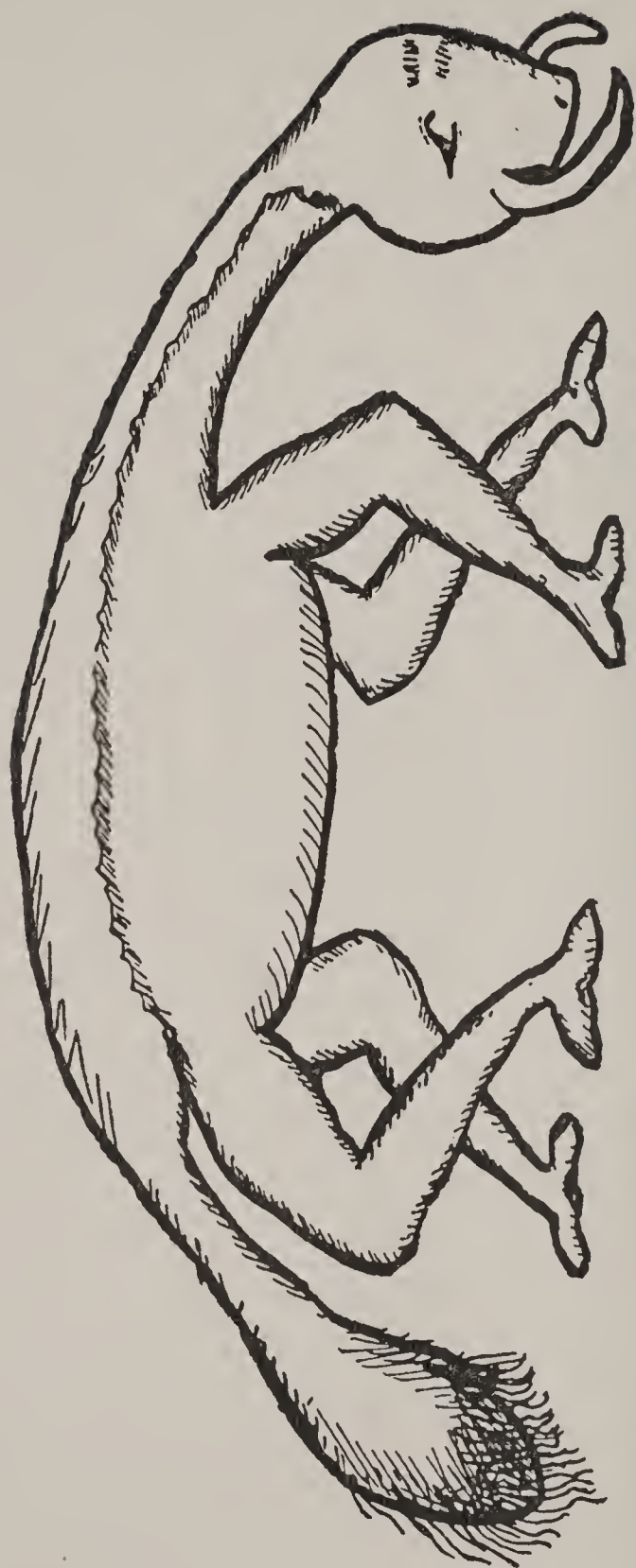
He is worried always because he never knows quite where his legs are going to take him. He gives them directions every morning and they always start out for the right place, but often just as they arrive at the door of his destination, they turn round and go galloping off to somewhere entirely different. He tries hard to control them but it is very difficult for him, for he *is* more leg than anything else, except perhaps neck, and that is rather a hindrance than a help because it makes his head so far off from his legs. His tail is entirely neutral and does not help either way. The result of all this is that he is very much aware if he should try and be too firm with his legs they might refuse to work altogether. They have threatened to do this. So he walks all day with his head turned round this way, back-

wards, so that his legs will not take him somewhere by surprise. They (the legs) are always indicating that they think he should buy a car, so that they would not have to do any more work. They cannot speak in words but they show this feeling by stopping and pointing at a car whenever they see one. This often makes it very difficult for Squilly when he is crossing the road in the crowded traffic, but they have no consideration for his feelings.

Of course his friends say that he simply is not firm enough and that he has no will power, "Just look at his chin," they say. But personally I sympathize with him and am going to get up a subscription to buy him a motorcycle. I do not know how he will fit himself on to one. Perhaps he can have a side car attached for his neck.

He lives in a bath tub that has been turned upside down. He has it fitted up very comfortably with electric lights and cushions and he warms himself on the hot tap.

SLOOT



SLOOT

The Slood, which is the name of this animal, is a really horrid creature. His mother, I should add, calls him Bertie. He is not supposed to get into this book at all, but as you can see if you look at the picture, it is very difficult to tell whether he is going or coming, and I made the mistake of thinking he was going, and he wasn't at all.

He is not even sincerely horrid like Growp so you cannot get any enjoyment out of him by throwing broken saucers at him and then seeing if you can get safely away, as you can with the other. He is shy and soft spoken, in fact he has taken to speaking with a lisp of a peculiar kind because he thinks it makes him sound innocent. He is trying hard to get taken into society among the other animals and has learnt to play the harp in the hope that people will ask him to entertain their guests after dinner.

These are some of his bad habits. He does not wash, he only pretends to, and sometimes just wets the parts that show; also he listens behind keyholes and reads other people's letters, and he treads on old gentlemen's toes for

spite, and then tries to look as if some one else had done it and says, "Really, how *can* people be so rude!"

In fact he is no gentleman, and never will be. And just *look* at his tail.

BLUMPLEBY



BLUMPLEBY

This is Blumpleby. His friends call him Peewit because it pleases him. He is very old, no one can remember when he was young, it was so long ago. He is not a very pleasant person because he has no manners. He only says "Hey" when you speak to him, unless you are talking about meals when he becomes very interested. His table manners are disgusting. Once he tried to eat peas with his fingers and got into a terrible mess because he had taken too much gravy on the same plate. If you look at his hands you will see he ought never to use them if he can use a fork instead, but he always does.

Some one said he had not had a bath for three years, eight months and four days, but I hope this is not true.

He lives in a mud hut which has only one room and no furniture. He used to have some chairs, but whenever he sat on them the seats fell through, and the legs doubled up, so he has given up trying to sit on anything except the floor.

He spends most of his time reading old newspapers which he eats when he has read. He believes that if he

eats enough he will soon know everything in the world. He has been eating them for years, however, and the only remark he ever makes is still "Hey," so I don't think his plan is very successful.

I must tell you that he is very vain and all round the walls of his mud hut are hung pictures of himself when he was young—at least *he* says they are, but as some of them are quite handsome most people do not believe he is speaking the truth.

SKOONK



SKOONK

The Skoonk has a very sad story. To begin with he only eats sea-shells because he has a weak indigestion, and as a result he has become terribly thin. He is nearly always cold too. But what is worst is that he is hardly ever allowed to talk. Somehow the diet of sea-shells has made his voice shrill and squeaky, like the sound of a knife scraped on a plate. So whenever he starts to talk the rest of the animals say, as politely as they can but very quickly, "Oh, *please* stop!" And if he goes on they are apt to throw things at him. This is not because they do not love him, for he is gentle and well-bred, but they just cannot bear his voice. So now he never talks, he writes hundreds of letters. His friends have given him a typewriter, and he sits in his house all day and writes to them, one after another. He tells them what the weather is like, and if the water was hot for his bath, and what he wants to have for his next birthday. Sometimes he gives a party and for these occasions he puts up a big blackboard in the drawing-room with "HOW DO YOU DO? I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU. HELP YOURSELF TO TEA," written on it. Then he does not

have to say a word but just smiles and shakes hands. Many people who can speak quite well have taken up the idea from him because they think it saves so much trouble.

He lives in a little house of dark red brick with purple tiles which his friends built for him because they felt sorry for him. (It was one day after they had thrown a brick at him.)

On the whole he doesn't have a bad time really. He looks pathetic in the picture because it was taken on a day when the rest were all going to sing at a concert. Of course he was not allowed to, and he *did* want to so much. However he was allowed to sell programs and that made him feel happy again.

PUFFTUFFIN



PUFFTUFFIN

This is a truly kindly animal. He is all soft except for his head, his legs and his shirtfront, and people like to fall about on him when he is near because he is so soft and comfortable to land on. In the winter he earns his living as a sort of stove, people come and warm their hands on him when it is cold and they have lost their gloves. He only charges half-price to children.

He was unfortunately born without any legs and for many years he tried to get about by rolling. But when it was wet his nice soft fuzz stuck to the pavement and got dirty, besides making it difficult for him to get along. So quite late in life he decided to grow some legs. He took some Ambulatory Pills after meals every day for three weeks and presently the legs began to appear. But when they had grown a few inches he thought he noticed something queer about them. As he was not accustomed to legs, he went around with them to a friend (it was to Skutch because he had taken some pills to grow arms and had succeeded very well). The friend looked at them and said,

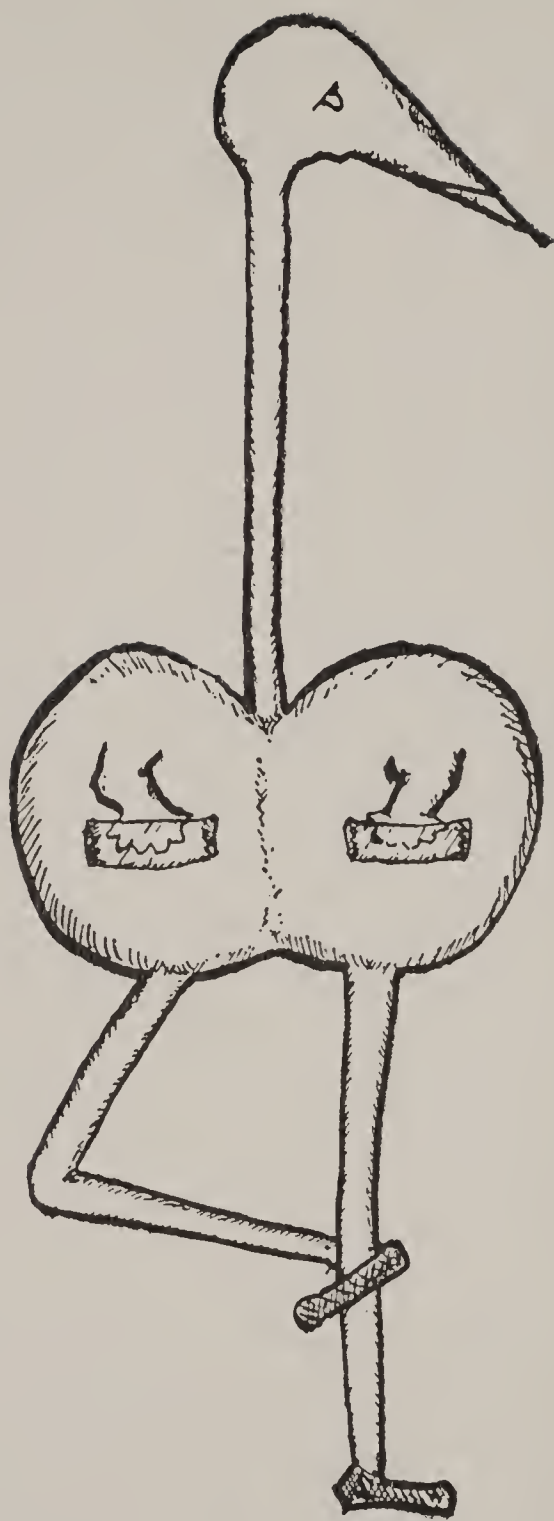
“When did you take those pills?”

Pufftuffin said, "After meals every day."

"Oh dear, what have you done?" said the friend, "They ought to have been taken before meals. Now you will always be knock-kneed because they will grow out the wrong way."

And that is what happened. Pufftuffin tried taking all sorts of other pills, eating them frantically *before* meals, but it was too late. All he could do was to make his feet turn out the right way, and as they are the bottom of his legs, I hardly think it was an improvement. However, they are perfectly good for walking with even on wet days.

SKUTCH



SKUTCH

This is usually called Skutch. He is hoping you will think him quite grown-up and that is why he is standing in such a peculiar attitude. I tried to persuade him to put both feet on the ground while he was being drawn because he kept falling about when he was standing this way, but he would not because he thought he looked more interesting this way. People meeting him for the first time might think he was conceited but he really isn't—at least not much. He is always teased by his brothers because he is so tall and that has made him rather shy and silent. His great ambition is to be a coat-of-arms when he is grown up and he goes to a studio to practise for this every day. You will see he has two rather darling little hands in two pockets. Now none of the rest of his family have hands—they never have—but he thought they were rather smart things to have so he grew a pair and had some pockets made so that he could put them inside, like this. He can't use his hands for anything except ornament.

He feeds on self-filling fountain pens with the tops on and unsharpened pencils. He doesn't like sharpened

ones because the points stick in his throat and if anything gets stuck in his throat there is no room for anything to pass it. He has to be very careful about his diet. Once some one made him swallow a box of golf-balls for a joke. The lid of the box came off just as it got half-way down his neck, and all the balls came out at once. His appearance was completely altered for some days, and his throat has been rather sore ever since.

SPINICUM



SPINICUM

A long time ago the Spinicum had two tails. It was his chief claim to social distinction, which means that people invited him out to parties and teas simply because he had two tails, and that started a cheerful conversation when the guests were shy or the tea was late in coming up. He wore his tails on either side of him instead of at the back, and every Saturday he used to curl them with a hot toasting-fork so that he would look smart on Sunday. I do not know why he used a toasting-fork instead of ordinary curling irons, I think it was because he liked the peculiar wave that the fork produced.

One day he was invited to a party and went up to his room to get ready and curl his tails. He could not find the fork anywhere. He ran up and down the house and looked in the cupboards and on the shelves and all the time the clock went on ticking till there were only five minutes left before the party began. Then he saw his nephew was in the garden digging potatoes with it. By the time he had got hold of it and had started to curl it was very late indeed. So he boldly cut off the right hand tail because he did not have time to curl it, and put

it on his dressing-table, expecting to sew it on when he came home.

But he never saw his tail again. While he was gone his little nephew took it out to play "dressing up" with it. He was having a lovely time pretending he was his uncle, when a very noisy dog rushed up to him and ran away with the tail in his teeth. Little nephew was too frightened to run after the dog and it was never seen again.

So ever since that day, Spinicum always walks looking at the pavement, hoping that the dog may have dropped the tail by now and that he will find it sometime lying in the dust. Meanwhile he has grown a beard, or has tried to, and hopes it will make up for the tail. But it doesn't at all.

SHIMMYHONK



SHIMMYHONK

The Shimmyhonk is a lady as you can see by her smile and dainty steps. She is rather vain and thinks a good deal of her appearance. She is not very attractive, for one thing it is a matter of doubt whether she has any body. Spiteful people have been heard to say that where she isn't neck she is leg, and vice versa, but I am glad to say that Shimmyhonk has never heard anybody say this for it would hurt her feelings.

She gives music lessons to the younger animals on the piano and harp. In fact she is the only animal who knows how to play any instrument (except Sloom, who does not count), so she has to play for all the parades and concerts that are given. She likes playing at concerts because she has a most elegant bow that she is able to give on those occasions.

Another thing she likes is having her photograph taken. She has one done every week in a different pose; playing the piano, playing the harp, playing both together, sitting in the garden with a basket of flowers round her neck, reading a book by the open window, pouring tea out of her silver tea-pot. She also collects picture-post-

cards, and all the animals know her postcard album very well indeed, because she always gets it out to show to them when they come to tea, before they have been in the house five minutes, and the younger animals look at it while they are waiting for their music lessons.

She is as yet a maiden lady, but it is said that Golophos is rather fond of her, and thinks that she alone of all the animals is genteel enough to be a good wife to him. However he has not said anything about the matter to her yet, and I doubt if he does for a long time, because, in spite of his pride, he is very poor and could not support a wife.

THE END

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